



Honorable Spencer Cox  
Governor  
350 N. State Street, Suite 200  
P.O. Box 142220  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2220

Dear Governor Cox:

We write to urge you to veto HB111 which will remove any age requirement for the operation of an ATV. Rather, HBXX would allow any child under age 18 to operate an off-highway vehicle if the driver can reach the controls of the vehicle and is under the “direct supervision” of a person over 18-year-old. However, that term does not require the supervising individual to be in the vehicle but rather has visual contact, no more than 300 feet away.

The provisions of HB111 put Utah children at serious risk. The American Academy of Pediatrics (“AAP”) has said “Off-road vehicles are particularly dangerous for children younger than 16 years who may have immature judgment and motor skills. Children who are not licensed to drive a car should not be allowed to operate off-road vehicles. Injuries frequently occur to passengers; therefore, riding double should not be permitted.”

We agree.

On August 11, 2020, 12-year-old Marley Trango from Goshen, Utah lost her life in an ATV related accident. She was riding on the ATV with her 13-year-old friend who was driving. The driver told deputies that the ATV jerked suddenly to the side and it caused the 12-year-old girl to fall off. The victim suffered multiple serious head injuries that ultimately led to her death; Marley had a helmet in the vehicle but was not wearing it. A 10-year-old friend on the ATV was wearing a helmet and was uninjured. A helicopter took her to Utah Valley Hospital where she was pronounced dead four hours following the crash.<sup>i</sup>

There are similar tragic stories bringing sorrow to families in Utah and the U.S. “More kids die on ATVs than die from bicycle crashes,” said Charles Jennissen, M.D., FAAP, a pediatrician and safety ATV expert in an AAP article. According to an AAP article, in 2015, at least 73 children younger than 16 died and 26,700 were seriously injured in ATVs crashes. In addition to the sorrow, serious ATV crash injuries lead to budget consequences for a state when a victim is uninsured.<sup>ii</sup> Many of the serious injuries involve head and neck injuries and 46 percent of those injuries involved children.<sup>iii</sup>

Safe Kids is a grassroots organization dedicated to preventing unintentional child injuries, the leading cause of American kids—and the number one contributor to that data point are road fatalities. Our network of over 400 coalitions is led by children’s hospitals, first responders, public health departments and community non-profits. Safe Kids Utah is based at the Utah Health Department, and there are nine local coalitions throughout the state.



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April 21, 2021

Unintentional injuries are preventable and one of the ways to prevent such injuries are strong safety laws. Based on the foregoing, Governor Cox, we strongly urge you to veto HB XXX.

Sincerely,



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<sup>i</sup> Wells D, "Girl, 12, dies after falling from four-wheeler in Utah Co.," Fox 13, August 11, 2020. Available at: <https://www.fox13now.com/news/local-news/girl-12-dies-after-falling-from-four-wheeler-in-utah-co>

<sup>ii</sup> Koriath T, "ATVs kill more children than bicycles: AAP urges families to yield to safety," AAP News, August 23, 2018. Available at <https://www.aappublications.org/news/2018/08/23/ppatv082318>

<sup>iii</sup> Murez Cara Roberts, "Too Many Kids Getting Seriously Hurt Riding ATVs: Study," *U.S. News & World Reports*, August 13, 2020. Available at: <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2020-08-13/too-many-kids-getting-seriously-hurt-riding-atvs-study>